

# Northfield Town Forest Stewardship Outreach Plan Implementation Guidelines

## Summary

The following document contains the Stewardship Outreach Plan for the Northfield Town Forest. It begins with the goals of the Forest Stewardship Plan listed in the table below. These goals were defined by members of the Northfield community.

The guidelines include activities designed to meet the community's goals for the Town Forest. The activities are broken down into an implementation timeframe (1-3 years, 4-6 years, and 7-10 years). The timeline is arranged to gradually build community around the forest while simultaneously building the community's capacity to engage in Town Forest related projects. Many of the activities are designed to be annual events so that the total number of outreach activities occurring at the Town Forest will increase cumulatively over the course of the plan.

Each activity is then described in detail. The goals that each activity has been designed to meet are listed. The target audience for each activity is defined. The principle message that each activity is intended to convey is stated. The means of advertising for the activity are given. Finally, a method for evaluating the effectiveness of each activity is outlined.

The activities have been created with an eye toward connecting town residents to the forest and increasing their sense of place. The activities also aim to increase town residents understanding of the ecological processes involved in the forest and their understanding of and appreciation for the forest stewardship plan. Activities have been designed around the concept of an inclusive outreach plan that will appeal to different ages, potential user groups, and segments of the population.

## Forest Stewardship Goals

## Recommended Timeframe for Activities to Meet Forest Stewardship Goals

### **Activities Years 1-3**

**Activity:** “Getting to Know the Land” Series: A series of workshops on wildlife tracking, birding, and native flora and fauna identification.

**Goals Met by Activity:** Promote Biological Diversity, Increase Public Awareness of your FSP and Forest Stewardship

**Target Audience:** Forest landowners, community members, recreational users, schools, civic and other non-governmental organizations, natural resource professionals, land trusts, and conservation commission

**Message:** Forest Stewardship helps promote ecological integrity and biodiversity while fostering a connection between people and the forest.

**Advertising:** Newspaper press release, newspaper feature article, town website, email, flyers, bulletin boards, posters, face-to-face encounters

**Evaluation:** Post workshop surveys

**Activity:** Annual “Photograph your Forest” Contest: Photos taken by community members are selected for inclusion in a calendar.

**Goals Met by Activity:** Increase Public Awareness of your FSP and Forest Stewardship, Preserve or Improve Scenic Beauty

**Target Audience:** Recreational users, community members, town board or community group willing to judge photos and organize calendar creation

**Message:** The Town Forest has important resource and aesthetic values that deserve celebration and special emphasis.

**Advertising:** Newspaper feature article, newspaper press release, websites, bulletin boards email, calendars created with winning photographs

**Evaluation:** Success of this photo contest can be measured by number of photos submitted and the number of calendars printed and sold. Tracked annually, this will show if the “Photograph your Forest” activity is popular in the community.

**Activity:** BioBlitz: A BioBlitz is an event to find and identify as many plants and animals as possible on the property. This gives the public an opportunity to explore, learn, and connect with the local landscape and provides useful ecological information about the natural resources location on the property.

**Goals Met by Activity:** Promote Environmental Education and Interpretation, Promote Biological Diversity

**Target Audience:** School groups, citizen scientists, natural resource professionals, birding groups, garden clubs

**Message:** A BioBlitz increases awareness of natural resources on the property through public engagement.

**Advertising:** Birding groups, garden clubs, newspaper release, town website, school groups

**Evaluation:** Post event evaluation

**Activity:** Trail Creation/Adopt a Trail: Form a committee of interested town residents to help in the design of a hiking trail on the Town Forest property. Once the route is planned, gather volunteers for a work day to create the trail. Have multiple volunteer groups adopt sections of the trail that they will be responsible for maintaining in the future. This project will give the community a sense of ownership and connection to the Town Forest. It will also provide increased recreation opportunities for town residents to enjoy the forest and develop a sense of appreciation for it as a resource.

**Goals Met by Activity:** Improve Access of Walking/Skiing/Recreation, Promote Environmental Education and Interpretation

**Target Audience:** Town residents, civic groups, youth groups, school groups, church groups, businesses

**Message:** This project is designed to make the Town Forest a more accessible and enjoyable destination for town residents to recreate in.

**Advertising:** Newspapers press release, town website, email, flyers

**Evaluation:** Post-project volunteer surveys, periodic user surveys

**Activity:** Vernal Pool Certification: Utilize groups to identify, process, and submit data to the Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program in order to further protect this important natural resource.

**Goals Met by Activity:** Promote Biological Diversity, Protect Water Quality, Promote Environmental Education and Interpretation, Protect Unique/Special/Cultural Areas, and Increase Local Participation in Forest Stewardship

**Target Audience:** Middle/High Schools, community youth groups, and interested community members

**Message:** Vernal pool habitat should be protected for special breeding grounds of state listed species.

**Advertising:** Brochures, fact sheets, displays, town website, workshop

**Evaluation:** Success of protection from NHESP, post-event survey from students and group leaders

**Activity:** Vernal Pool Data Collection: Utilize groups to collect water, wildlife, and plant data to track the changes of the vernal pool throughout the year and over time.

**Goals Met by Activity:** Promote Biological Diversity, Protect Water Quality, Promote Environmental Education and Interpretation, Protect Unique/Special/Cultural Areas, and Increase Local Participation in Forest Stewardship

**Target Audience:** Middle/High Schools, community youth groups, and interested community members

**Message:** As part of protection, monitoring key features of vernal pools helps people understand this unique and valuable habitat.

**Advertising:** Brochures, fact sheets, displays, town website, workshop

**Evaluation:** Post-event survey from students and group leaders

**Activity:** Welcome Kiosk: Create kiosk from local, sustainably harvested wood products. Kiosk can include maps of property and trail system, as well as information about the Forest Stewardship Plan and natural resources found on the property.

**Goals Met by Activity:** Improve Access for Walking/Skiing/Recreation

**Target Audience:** Recreational users, community members, conservation commission, trails groups

**Message:** The Town Forest is available for public use and enjoyment.

**Advertising:** Town website, newspaper feature article, press event

**Evaluation:** Kiosk could include a survey or suggestion box to make sure the management of the Town Forest via the Forest Stewardship Plan and associated Outreach Plan is responsive to needs of the community.

**Activity:** Wolf Tree Inventory: Wolf trees are large, old trees with wide, open crowns typically found near stone walls. They are indicators of past land use and either were left when the rest of the trees were removed to make a pasture or got a start and remained growing after pasture land was cleared. Since the tree once grew free of competition with other trees, they were able to grow wide, broad crowns. Today, these trees provide essential wildlife habitat and diversity in forest structure. Documenting how many wolf trees, diameters, locations, and species use would be valuable natural history information to catalog.

**Goals Met by Activity:** Promote Environmental Education and Interpretation Protect Unique/Special/Cultural Areas

**Target Audience:** Community members, landowners

**Message:** Wolf tree inventories catalogue important natural features on the landscape that are crucial to wildlife and understanding the past land use.

**Advertising:** Newspaper press release, town website, flyers, library, general stores

**Evaluation:** Post-workshop survey

### **Activities Years 4-6**

**Activity:** Trail to Waterfall off Hobo Trail: This trail will continue efforts to connect the Hobo Trail (and the waterfall) with the New England National Scenic Trail.

**Goals Met by Activity:** Preserve or Improve Scenic Beauty

**Target Audience:** community members, youth groups, trails groups

**Message:** This trail will increase access to scenic views and promote national trail connections.

**Advertising:** Newspaper press release, town website, flyers, library, general stores

**Evaluation:** Post-project volunteer surveys, periodic user surveys

**Activity:** Stream monitoring: This activity would provide an opportunity to engage community members in stream sampling methodologies. The data collected would provide a baseline to track any changes in stream health, especially if done on an annual basis.

**Goals Met by Activity:** Protect Water Quality

**Target Audience:** Community members, watershed groups

**Message:** Stream health is directly related to sound forest stewardship practices.

**Advertising:** Newspaper press release, newspaper feature article, town website, flyers, library, general stores

**Evaluation:** Post-project volunteer surveys, analysis of collected data

**Activity:** Reading the Landscape Workshops: These workshops would be designed to teach people how to read signs on the landscape to interpret past land uses. The features highlighted on this property would include stonewalls, cellar holes, pasture or wolf trees and topography changes.

**Goals Met by Activity:** Promote Environmental Education, Protect Unique/Special/Cultural Areas

**Target Audience:** Community members, landowners

**Message:** Engaging the local community promotes understanding of the cultural history and how it has impacted the forest as we see it today.

**Advertising:** Newspaper press release, town website, flyers, library, general stores

**Evaluation:** Post-workshop survey

**Activity:** Owl Boxes: Focus on having a group or groups construct owl boxes and place them in appropriate locations. Host a workshop about owl habitat and natural history.

**Goals Met by Activity:** Promote Biological Diversity, Enhance Habitat for Birds, Promote Environmental Education and Interpretation, Increase Local Participation in Forest Stewardship

**Target Audience:** Community youth groups, community organizations, landowners

**Message:** Owl boxes increase nesting areas for owls and the workshops promote understanding of habitat and natural history.

**Advertising:** Brochures, newspaper press release, bulletin boards, displays, signs

**Evaluation:** Post-workshop surveys

**Activity:** Owl Prowl: A speaker will give an informational lecture about owls of the region and their natural history followed by a walk around the Town Forest calling owls for the group to observe.

**Goals Met by Activity:** Promote Environmental Education and Interpretation, Increase Local Participation in Forest Stewardship

**Target Audience:** Community youth groups, community organizations, landowners

**Message:** Owl prowls promote education of species in the area and about the forest community.

**Advertising:** Newspaper press release, bulletin boards, displays, signs

**Evaluation:** Post-event surveys

**Activity:** Bat Boxes: Focus on having a group or groups construct bat boxes and place them in appropriate locations. Host a workshop about bat habitat and natural history.

**Goals Met by Activity:** Promote Biological Diversity, Enhance Habitat for Birds, Promote Environmental Education and Interpretation, Increase Local Participation in Forest Stewardship

**Target Audience:** Community youth groups, community organizations, landowners

**Message:** Bat boxes increase nesting areas for bats and the workshops promote understanding of habitat and natural history.

**Advertising:** Brochures, newspaper press releases, bulletin boards, displays, signs

**Evaluation:** Post-workshop surveys

**Activity:** Town Forest Celebration Day: Hold an annual event at the Town Forest to celebrate its place and importance within the community. Multiple workshops and activities could be included in the event such as interpretive hikes, scavenger hunts, clean ups, orienteering, and nature art contests. Local businesses could donate funds for supplies or food and drinks. This activity would be a chance for the town to come together around the Town Forest and a good opportunity to increase the awareness of the forest among town residents.

**Goals Met by Activity:** Promote Environmental Education and Interpretation, Increase Awareness of FSP and Forest Stewardship, Improve Public Attitudes about FSP and Forest Stewardship, Increase Local Participation in Forest Stewardship

**Target Audience:** Community members, landowners

**Message:** This event would engage the local community in a celebration of their Town Forest and increase their awareness, understanding, appreciation, and sense of stewardship towards it as a resource.

**Advertising:** Newspaper press release, town website, flyers, library, general stores

**Evaluation:** Post-event survey

### **Activities Years 7-10**

**Activity:** Neighborhood Outreach to ATV Users: Illegal ATV use on the property is an issue that threatens the conservation values and recreational resources for the rest of the community. This workshop would engage local ATV users and inform them of the ecological values of the property to prevent future destructive use. This would help foster a relationship between the town and the group in a positive manner. This workshop, in conjunction with other measures such as signs and road blocks, could decrease illegal ATV activity.

**Goals Met by Activity:** Protect Water Quality, Protect Unique/Special/Cultural Areas

**Target Audience:** ATV users, community members

**Message:** This workshop will create a positive relationship between the town and ATV users.

**Advertising:** ATV clubs, newspaper press release, flyers, library, general stores

**Evaluation:** Monitor ATV use on property by site visits

**Activity:** Green Certification Workshops: Green Certification is a professional acknowledgement of a landowner's responsible forest management that is deemed environmentally appropriate, socially beneficial and economically viable through independent audits of landowner practices. The goals of this workshop are to increase public awareness of Green Certification and determine the steps needed to attain certification for this property.

**Goals Met by Activity:** Attain Green Certification, Increase Public Awareness and Public Attitudes of FSP and Forest Stewardship, Increase Local Participation in Forest Stewardship

**Target Audience:** Landowners, foresters, loggers, conservation commission, natural resource professionals

**Message:** This workshop is designed to help people identify the steps needed to attain Green Certification by providing them with information about sustainable forestry and the process of Green Certification.

**Advertising:** Newspaper press release, town website, email

**Evaluation:** Post-workshop survey

**Activity:** Pre and Post Timber Harvest Walks: Educational walks will be held before and after any major silvicultural treatments are performed on the property. They will be open to the public and will be heavily advertised. The walks will be led by the forester who prescribed the treatment or by someone closely involved with the upcoming work. The walk will explain the reasoning for the treatment, how it will be carried out, and the short and long term effects of the treatment. It will be open to the public and will be a forum for the public to express their thoughts and learn in greater detail about the overall FSP on the property and what is behind the current work being accomplished.

**Goals Met by Activity:** Increase Awareness of FSP and Forest Stewardship, Improve Public Attitudes about FSP and Forest Stewardship, Increase Local Participation in Forest Stewardship

**Target Audience:** Community members, landowners

**Message:** Silvicultural treatments conducted within the context of a long term FSP are important methods for ensuring a healthy forest that provides multiple uses and resources to different groups. By better understanding the principles and reasoning behind the decision making, the community gains an appreciation for the work involved and can give a more informed opinion when management options are being debated.

**Advertising:** Newspaper press release, town website, flyers, library, general stores

**Evaluation:** Post-walk surveys

Landowner: Town of Northfield Conservation Commission

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_